



SITE VISITS SUMMARY

Event: *Anne Arundel County Site Visits*

Dates: March 8-9, 1999; March 23-24, 1999; April 7-8, 1999; April 27-28, 1999

Location: Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, Annapolis, Maryland

I. Summary

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, coordinated two-day site visits at the request of several Regional and State Department of Health and Human Services Offices. States were invited to participate based on findings resulting from the Network's national needs assessment regarding the challenges and successes of implementation of State welfare reform initiatives. Ms. Vesta Kimble, Deputy Director of the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, led the site visit. Ms. Kimble provided an in-depth description of Anne Arundel County's Family Investment Program. This technical assistance event afforded participants an opportunity to observe Anne Arundel's welfare service delivery system first hand.

II. Participants

A. March 8-9, 1999

Site visit participants included representatives from New Jersey's State TANF and DOL offices as well as representatives from New Jersey's two largest urban counties, Essex and Hudson. Site Visit participants from New Jersey's State office included: Gene Martorony, Deputy Director of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services; Mary Lucas, Assistant Director, County Operations of the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services; Marie Gladney, Assistant Director of Work First Operations, Department of Labor; and Darin Miller, consultant from Janus Solutions. Representatives from the County of Essex Administration included Thomas Banker, Deputy County Administrator; Jeffrey Bertrand, Director of the Department of Economic Development/Employment Training; and Geri Durso, Chief of Staff. Representatives from the Hudson County Welfare Agency included Mary Ann McGuire, Administrative Supervisor, and Lois Velez, Training Supervisor. Other representatives included John Horejsi from the ACF Central Office and Patricia Jeffers, Policy Research & Legislative Project Manager from the Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources.

B. March 23-24, 1999

Site visit participants included Reverend Rich Hendricks, Executive Director, St. Andrews Mission, Inc., McComb, Mississippi, Beverly Hardy, Housing Program Specialist, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC, and Patricia Jeffers, Policy Research & Legislative Project Manager, Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources. These participants were joined by representatives from the *JobsPlus* partnership program in Syracuse, New York, who were conducting their own site visit without the Network's assistance.

C. April 7-8, 1999

Site visit participants included representatives from TANF offices from the states of Mississippi, West Virginia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and two different human service provider agencies from Missouri. Two representatives from the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc. in Maryland were also present. Other representatives included John Horejsi from the ACF Central Office and Patricia Jeffers, Policy Research & Legislative Project Manager from the Family Investment Administration, Maryland Department of Human Resources.

D. April 27- 28, 1999

Site visit participants included representatives from TANF offices from the states of Virginia, Delaware, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Maine. Other representatives included John Horejsi from the ACF Central Office and several representatives from the Maryland Department of Human Resources.

I. Day One Summary

A. Introduction and Background

The site visits all began with a welcome address and introductory remarks from representatives from the Peer TA Network as well as the site visit host Vesta Kimble. Immediately following the introduction, the participants introduced themselves and related what each of them was interested in learning about from Anne Arundel County.

1. March 8-9, 1999

New Jersey's welfare program, Work First New Jersey-TANF (WFNJ-TANF), is a county-administered, state-supervised welfare delivery system, which was fully implemented on July of 1997. Similar to other county-administered systems, New Jersey has 21 different varieties of welfare delivery. The counties present at the technical assistance site visit, Essex and Hudson, together hold approximately 50% of the state TANF population. Since the inception of WFNJ-TANF, New Jersey has experienced a 32% statewide reduction in its TANF caseload. The Essex and Hudson county TANF caseload reduction has been somewhat less dramatic (Essex 22%; Hudson 31%). There was a concern regarding urban counties' ability to meet the Federal employment and participation rates over time.

2. March 23-24, 1999

This site visit was coordinated largely in response to a request for technical assistance from St. Andrews Mission, Inc. in Mississippi. The mission's director, Reverend Rich Hendricks, requested aid in evaluating and monitoring the mission's services at its Family Investment Center under its Empowerment Plan. He was also interested in learning about ideas for fundraising and methods to continue sustainable growth. Services available include job training, lifeskills training, computer training, parenting classes, support groups, 18-month rent freeze against increases in earned income, low-cost child care for children four years old and under, after school programs, parish nurse availability, transportation assistance, legal services, and home repair services for low income, elderly, or disabled homeowners. The program began as a part of a study by Jackson State University for the Mississippi Department of Human Services under its Family Preservation and Support Division in 1996. It has continued since then under a Housing and Urban Development Family Investment Center Grant. AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers help staff the center.

3. April 7-8, 1999

Mississippi's state TANF office representative came to Anne Arundel to learn more about how Anne Arundel County conducts its assessments of clients, and a second aim was to gain insights into how St. Andrews Mission and other similar organizations in Mississippi could benefit from implementing Anne Arundel's initiatives with the states' assistance. West Virginia's representatives were interested in client flow and were seeking ideas they could use as their state sets up one stop job centers in the state. Missouri's representatives sought ideas on providing new transportation initiatives as well as collaborating transportation services. The Virgin Islands

representatives were interested in learning about Anne Arundel's assessment, client flow, and job placement. They were interested in setting up their own job center and wanted ideas to get started.

4. April 27-28, 1999

Participants on this site visit had similar interests as those mentioned above. This group's interests are also summarized below.

In addition to the above specifically mentioned areas, the above state and county representatives came to Anne Arundel County, Maryland, to examine how this county was functioning overall under welfare reform. Other issues of interest included:

- Information management systems
- Intake and assessment tools and flow
- Screening
- Culture change among recipients
- Supportive services
- Partnerships/networking with labor market
- Child care
- Substance abuse
- Transportation
- Use of sanctions
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Case management
- Client flow process
- Culture change among staff
- Initiatives for multilingual barriers
- Welfare diversion
- Domestic violence
- Learning disabled
- Community-based collaborations

The first part of day one involved an extremely interactive session on each of the site visits. Ms. Vesta Kimble, Deputy Director of the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, answered numerous questions and detailed how Anne Arundel County's Family Investment Administration implemented its welfare reform and culture change strategy.

Anne Arundel County - Family Investment Administration

Since its inception, more than 500 visitors from local, State, Federal, for-profit and non-profit organizations have toured the Job Centers in an effort to learn how Anne Arundel County changed the culture of welfare at the local level.

Even under the AFDC program, the Anne Arundel County local office changed the culture of welfare without any State legislation, Federal waivers, additional staff or additional allocation of funds. While Maryland has a state-administered and supervised system, the state encouraged 'local flexibility' thus allowing counties and localities to develop their own local plans. Anne Arundel County's local office changed the culture of welfare by transforming an impersonal bureaucracy into a professional Job Center that offers customized employment services for ANY County resident.

In implementing this change, Anne Arundel incorporated lessons learned from:

1. *Portland, OR*: Upfront job search coupled with child care subsidies for *any* AFDC applicant- not just recipients

2. *Minneapolis, MN*: On-site child care in the social services office
3. *Riverside County, CA & Kenosha, WI*: Importance of professional environments

In addition, the local office examined its applicants to capture a profile of who was actually applying for welfare benefits in its offices. “Applicants” became the focus, initially, of the welfare reform strategy. This initial data gathering provided an invaluable lesson in educating others (in and outside of their offices) about the average welfare client as well as ideas on how the local office could reorganize its assessment and client flow procedures. Findings showed that over 90% of applicants had a prior work history; 80% had a high school degree, and 33% even had completed some college. They found 60% had no transportation; 30 % live in public housing and 25% described themselves as having some type of physical disability/health problem or are caring for someone who does. This demonstrated the importance of up-front diversion to the county. Anne Arundel decided to do its assessments up front. It now screens for child care needs, evidence of substance abuse, transportation needs, domestic violence, and various other areas that generally prevent clients from seeking, gaining, and maintaining employment. This assessment process and the provision of supportive services up-front have resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of clients who go on to receive cash assistance versus those who initially enter the Job Center. Only five percent of Job Center customers go on to receive cash assistance.

The decision to transform the welfare office into a professional Job Center, which is open to the general public, enabled Anne Arundel County to remove the stigma of welfare and to mainstream welfare recipients with other unemployed County residents. Based on staff input, the local office developed a team of specialists composed of child care workers, child support workers, job counselors, and caseworkers and presented them with a set of objectives to meet for the year. (This is the reason Anne Arundel County’s model has been referred to as a *staff-directed model*.) In the first year, the Anne Arundel specialists’ team successfully met and exceeded their expected goals. Successes in the first year included:

- Quadrupled the number of job placements when compared to the PIC’s previous year
- Decreased the caseload faster than other Maryland counties by 12 percentage points
- Kept recidivism (return to welfare) at 10 percent
- Implemented up-front child care and transportation subsidies, which helped to divert hundreds of would-be applicants
- A formal cost-benefit analysis, conducted by the University of MD, concluded that every \$1 invested in the Job Center and its services, yielded \$2.70 in public program savings - funds not paid out in AFDC, Food Stamps, or Medicaid
- Reduced Maryland’s 14-page benefits application form to a one-page assessment form with the ability to input additional information directly into local data base designed in-house specifically to suit their needs

Anne Arundel’s Family Investment Administration is responsible for operating nine benefit programs, eleven service programs, and two Job Centers in order to address the financial, health, employment and family needs of Anne Arundel County residents.

The nine eligibility programs include:

- Medical Assistance and Long Term Care
- Food Stamps
- Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)
- Child Care
- Temporary Emergency Medical and Housing Assistance (state-funded cash program for single, disabled adults)
- Public Assistance to Adults
- HELP Grants (welfare avoidance grants)
- Burial Assistance

The eleven service programs operated by Anne Arundel County's Family Investment Administration include:

- Job Centers—Located at each of the agency's two district offices in Annapolis and Glen Burnie, the Job Centers provided employment and employment-related services to more than 20,000 Anne Arundel County residents during FY 98.
- Job Search—employability assessments; job search; job counselors provide supportive services to assist those in job search. Average wage at hire was \$6.07/hr. in FY 96, \$6.23/hr. in FY 97, \$6.50/hr. in FY 98.
- Careers Program—created in FY 98 to help low-income residents obtain living-wage jobs; encompasses several different occupational training programs including: home-based child care entrepreneurial training, AdVANTage van service (a van service entrepreneurs project in the county funded by a demonstration grant from the US Department of Transportation and operated by the Community Transportation Association of America) entrepreneurial training, electrical trades pre-apprenticeship training; computer training, fiber-optics training; and, college curricula of the customer's choice.
- Next Step—Program for those customers (5%) who were enrolled in job search but were unable to find a job.
- Child Support—Paralegal from Domestic Relations Division of Anne Arundel County Circuit Court located on-site in each of the agency's Job Centers. Creates child support cases and helps locate the non-custodial parents to bring legal action against them.
- Parents Too!—Program for non-custodial parents. Offers employment services and job training to low-income county residents who have a court order against them for child support.
- Transportation—In FY 98, \$137,000 spent on transportation subsidies that included: bus tokens, gasoline coupons, light rail tickets, fare cards for the AdVANTage van service program (whose van companies were started as a result of a demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation), vehicle repairs, car payments, insurance premiums, and Wheels for Work (a low-cost vehicle purchase program funded through *Maintenance of Effort* state funds for welfare avoidance grants).
- Clothing—career clothing vouchers, good at local department stores.
- Domestic Violence—screening for domestic violence; If suspected or acknowledged domestic violence, the customer receives a "staffing" in which their situation is discussed by a Job Counselor, Caseworker, and Social Worker to assist them. Many referred for further services to YWCA of Annapolis. The county partnered with the YWCA to develop domestic violence

training under a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services. For more information on the screenings and referral process, contact Vesta Kimble. For more information on the scope of services offered to victims, contact Lorraine Chase, Director, Domestic Violence Program, YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, (410) 757-8300.

- Substance Abuse-Screen Job Center customers for substance abuse. Eight percent have either acknowledged or been suspected of having a problem. These customers receive a “staffing” and some are referred for treatment
- Emergency Food–vouchers for emergency food purchases. Also make referrals to local food pantries and food distribution points for their basic food needs.

The Job Center in Annapolis is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Services offered by the Job Center include employment and employment-related services as well as family services. No appointments necessary; all services are on a walk-in basis. The process of learning about and receiving any of the above mentioned services begins on the very first day, when the individual enters the Job Center and meets with the Child Support Worker, Job Counselor, and Caseworker. Along with these services, the Family Investment Administration program also promotes diversion. The system has been streamlined and reversed so that applying for TANF benefits is now the very last step or option.

The change of culture, transformation of service delivery, and coordination of comprehensive services together enabled Anne Arundel County to achieve a 68% reduction in cash assistance caseloads between September 1995 and February 1999 while also maintaining a low recidivism rate (currently only 7% of those customers who find a job end up in the TANF caseload within 6 months). Although the TANF caseload has decreased markedly, the Family Investment Administration program’s caseloads overall have actually increased from 20,175 cases in 1995 to 20,467 in 1998. Nearly every TANF / TCA case closed remains open for Food Stamps and Medicaid. Moreover, nearly every would-be TANF / TCA applicant, who is diverted up-front through job search or HELP grants, applies for and receives Food Stamps and Medicaid, if only for their children. In fiscal year 1998, only 10% of the Family Investment Administration program’s total caseload within Anne Arundel County received Temporary Cash Assistance (TANF). The vast majority of the caseload, approximately 83%, received either Medical Assistance (Medicaid) and / or Food Stamps. These figures are also reflected at intake: Of the 1,770 Job Center customers served in February 1998, for example, only 5% received cash assistance. The other 95% of Job Center customers needed only a Job Counselor’s assistance or were self-service customers.

B. Tour of Anne Arundel County’s Job Center, Learning Center and Family Support Center

Following the interactive question and answer discussion, Ms. Kimble led the groups on a tour of Anne Arundel County’s Job Center, Learning Center and Family Support Center. The Annapolis Job Center was opened in February 1996. The Center is centrally located, accessible by public transportation, and very professional in environment. In fact, prior to housing the Job Center, the building was previously used by an investment brokerage firm. The Job Center is very spacious with a number of small round tables and chairs in the center of the room surrounded by the offices of the Job Counselors and Caseworkers. Throughout the room, one can find information

regarding local job listings, job fairs, and tax information. A nearby separate room contains computers with Internet access, telephones for calling potential employers, and professional clothing drop boxes.

The employment services found at the Job Center include:

- Employment assessments
- Vocational assessments for the disabled
- Occupational training
- Local job listings
- Job fairs
- Targeted hiring
- Resume computers
- Telephones for calling employers
- Micro-enterprise training
- Earned Income Credit
- Job Readiness

While interviewing with the Job Counselor, the customer learns about associated supportive services such as child care subsidies (informal or formal care), on-site child care (available immediately upon entering the Job Center) v if parents are on-site, transportation (bus tokens, gas vouchers, low-cost cars, door-to-door van service, car payments, insurance payments, driver training), and career clothing vouchers, as well as services available such as a telephone bank and a computer area. Job counselors also do initial domestic violence and substance abuse screening, information and referrals during their interview. Within the Job Center, is a suite where the Child Support Worker / Court Paralegal works on-site. As discussed during the interactive discussion, the Child Support Worker identifies the customer's needs regarding child support prior to interviewing with the Job Counselor.

Ms. Kimble then led the groups on a tour of the Learning Center. The Learning Center is located in the same building and on the same floor as the employment-focused Job Center. The Learning Center provides employment-based curricula: teen-parent high school, GED prep classes, ESL classes, computer training, an after-school club for local children and a summer camp for children ages 7-13.

After touring the Learning Center, the groups examined the Family Support Center. The Family Support Center houses the on-site day care and after-school group programs as well as the health services. Before entering the Job Center, customers first drop off their children at the on-site day care. There are two primary rooms with age-appropriate educational and recreational activities. All areas are kept clean (carpets in all three Centers are cleaned regularly; The FSC is sanitized twice a day). The Family Support Center also houses a full-time community health department nurse. Health services handled on site and free of charge include immunizations, healthy teen clinics, pregnancy testing, prenatal screening and WIC vouchers.

C. Panel Discussion

DSS staff talked about their primary roles and responsibilities. Presenters included:

- The Division Manager for Employment & Child Support
- A Child Support First Worker
- A Job Counselor
- A Caseworker

The panel described the general process / flow of Job Center services provided to the customer on their very first day at the agency.

1. The customer walks into the Job Center and signs in.
2. Drop off children at the on-site child care center.
3. Fill out a one-page assessment form.
4. Interview with Child Support Worker / Court Paralegal on staff.
During this interview, the customer is asked to identify any needs regarding child support such as paternity establishment of order, modification of existing order, enforcement of existing order, and discussion about “good cause” reasons for not filing child support.
5. Interview with Job Counselor. This interview includes domestic violence screening, substance abuse screening, employment assessment, enrollment in Up-front Job Search, child care vouchers, transportation subsidies, resume assistance, job leads, occupational training opportunities, referrals to other on-site services (Job Club, Careers program, GED preparation classes, ESL classes, WIC and Public Health Nurse, and social workers). If the job counselor suspects or knows that the customer has either a domestic violence or substance abuse problem, the job counselor calls a “staffing” immediately. During a staffing, additional counselors, caseworkers, child support workers, and any other appropriate individuals are brought in to discuss the specific case and to devise necessary next steps and appropriate resources.
6. Interview with Caseworker This interview includes applying for Medicaid and Food Stamps. If the caseworker recommends a HELP Grant (one-time, lump-sum payment issued to the customer in lieu of receiving TANF), then the interview includes that as well. A customer avoids using any of the 60-month welfare lifetime limit if they receive a HELP grant. Once all other options have been exercised, the caseworker determines the customer’s eligibility for TCA (TANF) if the customer still has a cash need and wants TCA.

D. Reconsideration Appointment Presentation

Following the panel discussion, the group observed a reconsideration appointment presentation (recon). Recons are held two times a day, several days a month in order to determine ongoing cash assistance eligibility for FS, MA and TCA. First, a group presentation was held with all clients receiving TCA. Individual recon appointments immediately followed the group presentation in order to discuss individual case plans. The site visitors, however, did not sit in on the individual recon sessions. At the group recon session, TCA customers were handed voter registration forms as well as blue change forms to document any recent case changes (income, job, people in household, hours worked, and/or wage). Customers were then reminded of the sanctions imposed on them if they did not show up at their scheduled recon appointments or if they refused to comply with work requirements. Following these statements, DSS staff members spoke specifically about child support enforcement, job search requirements, and diversion.

- 1) Child support enforcement is mandatory for all customers applying for either TCA or medical assistance and is optional for those applying solely for food stamps. The agency will allow the customer to not apply for child support only under “good cause” exceptions, such as domestic violence. Once information on the non-custodial parent is received, the DSS staff person can check automated files in order to locate the non-custodial parent. Furthermore, the agency can suspend the noncustodial parent’s drivers license if he or she doesn’t pay child support.
- 2) Mandatory job search requirements include job search activities for 30 hours a week (or less at the job counselor’s discretion). Customers are required to fill out as many as 10 applications or have 10 face-to-face interviews per week for 4 weeks. If no job is found, customers are enrolled in the Next Step program, which is a job club/life skills class that also continues the customer’s job search.
- 3) With the passage of PRWORA, customers are now faced with a cumulative lifetime limit of 5 years of TCA/TANF assistance. Therefore, customers should only use these services when there is absolutely no other option. They should look into receiving child care subsidies and Medicaid in lieu of TCA.

E. Perspective of the State of Maryland

The first day of the site visit concluded with a discussion by Patricia Jeffers from the Maryland Department of Human Resources regarding Maryland’s Family Investment Program. As Ms. Jeffers explained, Maryland’s total TCA caseload has declined 57.8% since January 1995. The Family Investment Program (FIP) was designed to assist individuals and families to move to independence as quickly as possible. This strategy assumes that those individuals with recent work histories, adequate education, and basic skills will transition into the labor market first. The savings generated from the resulting caseload reduction will then be used to help families with multiple barriers.

Several features of the Family Investment Program were crafted as alternative supports designed to divert customers from monthly cash assistance while continuing to provide necessary supportive services to move the customer to independence. Maryland’s Family Investment Program utilizes the three following strategies for this express purpose.

- Up-front Child Support. The local department intake process was redesigned. Modeled after the intake process found in Anne Arundel County, customers are first seen by the child support staff following their initial assessment. By accessing child care support from the non-custodial parent before applying for TCA/TANF, the process could potentially eliminate the need for cash assistance or shorten the time that the family will be on cash assistance.
- Welfare Avoidance Grant (WAG). This program feature allows the family to receive a lump sum cash payment ranging anywhere between a 3- and 12-month equivalent of TCA/TANF payments in order to alleviate a barrier to employment. For example, WAGs may be used for such services as car repairs, car insurance, or traffic violations. In order to receive a WAG,

the customer must agree not to apply for cash assistance during the period covered by the WAG.

- Purchase of Child Care (POC) and Medical Assistance (MA) in lieu of TCA. Clients who are technically and financially eligible for TCA but are only eligible to receive a very small cash benefit due to other countable income may opt out of receiving a cash benefit. This prevents the family from using up their lifetime limit of 60 months. The family is still given child care and medical assistance benefits without being subject to the time limit.

Ms. Jeffers also highlighted the fact that the Maryland has partnered with the University of Maryland to study what happens to clients after they leave temporary cash assistance. The study has issued three reports in a series of planned reports. It should assist local social service offices in their future planning as it describes the patterns and characteristics of temporary cash assistance cases that have closed throughout the state. This type of study is also being conducted in Iowa and is currently underway in ten states across the country under funding by the Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services. Incidentally, the Peer TA Network is coordinating a workshop of these ten states on May 10, 1999, to discuss preliminary findings of these *welfare leavers projects* studies. A summary report will be available on the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network's website shortly afterward.

IV. Day Two

On the second day, the entire group met at the County's Glen Burnie district office in order to tour the other Anne Arundel Job Center, Children's Center and Parent's Center.

A. Tour of Glen Burnie's Job Center, Children's Center and Parent's Center

In April 1997, Anne Arundel County opened a second Job Center in its Glen Burnie office. The primary reason for visiting the Glen Burnie Job Center was to examine how similar services can be implemented in different locations. The Glen Burnie Job Center is located within an institutional, government building. The Glen Burnie office is Maryland State property with much of the furniture built by prisoners. This type of setting is much more common for a TANF office and, therefore, allowed the representatives from New Jersey to more clearly visualize how this system could work for them. Furthermore, Glen Burnie's Job Center serves a larger number of customers than Annapolis. The other primary difference is that the Department of Social Services, The Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Labor are co-located within the same building. While the three departments are separate, the co-location lends to increased communication and work related support. The services and processes at the Glen Burnie Job Center, Children's Center, and Parent's Center are very similar to those discussed previously in Annapolis because every effort was made to replicate the Annapolis environments.

The second floor holds the Glen Burnie Job Center. Once again the area is large and open. In the center of Job Center, there are a number of smaller tables for customers to work at and materials regarding upcoming job fairs, employment related classes, and tax information. Around the perimeter are a number of smaller offices for the child support workers, caseworkers, and job

counselors. There are no discerning differences between the offices or the dress codes of these workers. Therefore, customers are not stigmatized regarding whom they are going to see. The big news at the time of the tour was the upcoming job fair. On April 1, 1999, they were hosting their largest job fair with up to 65 local employers.

After viewing the Job Center, the group headed downstairs to the first floor to examine the Children's Center. The Children's Center is Glen Burnie's drop-in child care center. Once again, the space was very clean and contained age-appropriate educational and recreational products. The first floor also houses the public health nurse, DSS social workers, and the Parents' Center, which is similar to Annapolis' Learning Center.

B. Tour of the Independent Electrical Contractors, Inc. (IEC)

After touring Glen Burnie's facilities, the group drove to Independent Electrical Contractors, Inc. (IEC) in Odenton, Maryland. The electrician's pre-apprenticeship training program by IEC is one of many training avenues available for Job Center customers under the Careers Program. Anne Arundel County collaborated with IEC's Chesapeake chapter and Anne Arundel Community College to set up the program. IEC is funded by welfare savings under an agreement with the community college. This unique program has been gaining national attention as IEC has been attracting funding from state and county agencies across the nation. It is tailored to meet the needs of workforce development in the electrical field and has been implemented to train the underemployed, unemployed, youth, and women in a nontraditional field.

As explained during our visit, electricians are in short supply across the metropolitan Washington DC area as well as nationally. It is estimated that by the year 2000, approximately 150,000 electrician positions will need to be filled nationally. The pre-apprenticeship program is taught by either a journeyman or master electrician and is designed to provide both a theoretical and practical, hands-on experience with electrical work and the electrical trade. The course also introduces them to the varied employment opportunities within the field of electrical work. The course is 12 weeks in duration, incorporating both classroom work and on-the-job training. The on-the-job training occurs twice in the training cycle at or around weeks six and nine. Experience shows that students often receive jobs from businesses where they have had on-the-job training. The cost is approximately \$5,500 per person, which includes the tools that students receive upon completion of the program. The Chesapeake chapter's program has a 83% graduation rate. Of the graduates, 93% are now working. Prior to the pre-apprenticeship training, students are asked to discuss their barriers. The two most common barriers are transportation and child care. IEC staff can then consult with the DSS staff in order to assist students in getting appropriate supportive services and HELP grants. The students are also screened and tested for substance abuse before entering the training program.

IEC also hired a part-time counselor as a part of the twelve-week training program. The counselor works with students in both individual and group sessions to support them with both work and life issues. Services include resume writing, interviewing, stress management, balancing work and family, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. Upon successful completion of the course, students are assisted with job placement, job development, help in arranging interviews, and follow-up.

After listening to the information regarding the pre-apprenticeship training program, the group was encouraged to speak to both the master electrician as well as the current students. One instructor pointed out that, although this program was for the electrical field, its basic idea could be replicated in any industry. He highlighted the program's emphasis on self-esteem building, teaming skills development, professional development, and life skills. A tour of the facility and its training areas offered the group an opportunity to see the program in operation.

IEC has over 75 chapters nationwide and is the second largest trainer of electricians in the United States. To learn more about establishing a training site in any particular state, local or state offices are encouraged to contact their local IEC chapter. For more information on the Chesapeake chapter's training program, contact Jim Deal, Director of Education, at (301) 621-9545.

DSS is in the process of using the electrical trades trainings module to expand to other non-traditional, industry-based training programs.

C. Tour of Sarah's House, Homeless Shelter

The site visit ended with a tour of Sarah's House by Laurie Sheffield-James. Sarah's House, a unique partnership between the U.S. Army, Anne Arundel County DSS, and Catholic Charities, was created in 1987 as a shelter for homeless men, women and children. Since its beginning, Sarah's House has continually expanded and modified its services in response to the changing needs of the homeless. Over time, Sarah's House has expanded from a simple shelter to a Supportive Housing Program with the goal of facilitating personal and professional changes encouraging economic self-sufficiency. Sarah's House is unique because it is located on property that is owned by the U.S. Army and leased to the DSS. The shelter consists of seven former Army barracks buildings that were renovated to meet the housing needs of the homeless. All of Sarah's House residents are referred by DSS social workers.

The group started the tour of Sarah's House by viewing the on-site day care services. The day care serves 35 children ranging in ages from 6 months to 6 years. The program provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum of care while parents work, attend training, or attend school. The group viewed the facilities as the children were taking their after-lunch nap. The space was very clean and held a variety of age-appropriate educational and recreational tools.

While at the day care, the group also learned about the Sarah's House School Age Program. The School Age Program provides before- and after-school care, picking up / dropping off at the bus, tutoring, homework assistance, enrichment activities and full day care on holidays and during summer vacation.

After viewing the day care facilities, the group toured the transitional and emergency shelter housing programs. In each of the housing facilities, the group examined the rooms where families and guests reside, and learned about the associated services and conditions of the residents.

- The Emergency Shelter Program serves Anne Arundel County's homeless men, women, and families by managing crises and affecting change. There are 66 spaces available under the Emergency Shelter Program, and often all of the spaces are full. Services include a safe environment, daily meals, personal care items, laundry facilities, telephone and mail access. Guests may stay in the program for up to 12 weeks if they are following their case plan, which likely includes work, training, or education. If guests do not participate in their case plan activities, they must leave within 6 weeks.
- The Transitional Housing Program builds upon the beginnings made in the shelter through continued support. The Transitional Housing Program consists of 4 buildings incorporating a total of 22 apartments. Residents pay a program fee, up to 30% of his/her adjusted income, to stay in the program. As Ms. Sheffield-James explained, residents may continue to reside at Sarah's House for up to 2 years as long as adults are either working or pursuing educational goals. While residing in either of the housing services, residents are exposed to the core services at Sarah's House, as well as utilization of the day care and school age programs.

Core services found at Sarah's House include:

- Case management – Each resident is assigned a caseworker who, in conjunction with the guest, assures the establishment of goals and serves as the primary link to resources and services.
- Transportation – A van service that operates on an established route provides residents with access to employment, training, education, medical and social service appointments, housing searches, and grocery stores.
- GED/Adult Basic Education – Provided on site through Anne Arundel Community College.
- Substance Abuse Assessment & Services – Each new resident is assessed within one week of placement. Individual and/or group counseling, support, and educational services are available to support in recovery effort.
- Site visits & Parenting Classes – Weekly parenting classes and life skills site visits are provided to residents to improve their ability to function independently and gain self-sufficiency.

Recent additions to the Sarah's House staff include an outreach coordinator to assist those moving into the community and an employment coordinator to further assist in assessing and building job skills.

V. Site Visit Feedback and Key Learnings

Participants completed a three-page evaluation form which asked them to rate the technical assistance support received and offer any additional comments regarding the site visit. The presenters were rated highly in terms of their knowledge, experience and information provided. Key learnings, or benefits that could result for site visitor's county/state offices, from the site visit were also solicited in the evaluations.

Following are a sample of the comments that participants provided through written feedback or during discussions throughout the visit.

1. Describe any immediate or long-term benefits to your agency that you anticipate as a result of the TA provided.

- Adoption of Job Center and Child Care concepts
 - Idea that a county welfare agency can provide supportive services to customers – child care, job development, after-school programs
 - Provided alternative way of thinking about and doing things
 - Able to meet with State officials at remote site, which furthered cooperation
 - Provided information helpful to us as we redesign our state plan
 - Valuable information in program and resource consolidation
 - Program ideas for designing a one stop model
-
- I was able to obtain a copy of the US Housing and Urban Development's *A Guide to Best Practices* that offers practical information for developing and implementing programs to enhance the safety and security, personal empowerment, and economic self-sufficiency of public housing residents. (For more information, contact the Center for Visionary Leadership, (202) 237-2800, or visit their web site at www.visionarylead.org.)
 - Ideas about conducting program evaluation.

2. Identify what was most useful about the TA.

- Interaction and discussion
- Day 1 – explanation of services available on-site
- The way in which Anne Arundel County “adopted” regulations to fit their needs
- Tour of Job Center facility in Annapolis gave us some good ideas – day care center, Job Center
- Observing the one stop model on operation
- Comparison of multi-state ideas and concerns: what works and does not work
- Awareness of what can be accomplished with coordination and cooperation between agencies
- Will offer us ideas for our TANF Work program in our state
- Policy on 24-month time limit
- Transportation ideas such as the *AdVANtage* program, Wheels to Work Program, and the proposed *Van Arundel* collaborative initiative proposed by the county to the Federal Transit Administration for its *Access to Jobs* Grants
- One-page client assessment form
- Observing a cooperative working relationship between the Maryland and Anne Arundel County social services offices. It was nice to see how things can be with cooperation and openness on the part of the state and local offices.
- Ideas on how to serve more clients with less money

3. What are some ideas you would like to see implemented in your county or state?

- On-site child care for our job center- upfront and easily accessible for parents
- Reorganized and modernized one stop center with ideas from Anne Arundel's center (Many states are still in the process of setting up their centers and found the TA very helpful.)
- Anne Arundel's flow of clients in its Job Center
- Anne Arundel's client assessment and screening ideas
- I plan to discuss possible changes in the 24-month time limit policy with my supervisor.
- Transportation ideas from Anne Arundel will be presented to our Resource Development Unit. Our current van program is cumbersome and time consuming.
- Redesign of our state's client assessment form
- I plan to contact my local university to investigate the idea of using graduate students to assist me in conducting an evaluation our Family Investment Center and our Empowerment Plan.
- I will look into setting up a pilot project for my state that would be a collaborative effort between the department of human services, the local community college, and my organization.
- I wish every State, country, and local human service provider agency could come to Anne Arundel County!

VI. Final Remarks

Site visitors to Anne Arundel County were overwhelmed with a vast amount of information about many different programs that the county's department of social services offers. They were also inundated with initiatives that the county tried in the past as well as those it plans to begin in the coming months. It seemed as though there was something for everyone to learn from regardless of what organization they represented. Obviously, not every social service office or community organization will be able to duplicate Anne Arundel's successes due to myriad differences in client populations, local economics, local job markets, transportation systems, geography, political situations, lack of educational systems, or other reasons. The challenge for the Anne Arundel County site visitors, as well as others who learn about the county's programs, is to customize, modify, or otherwise take steps toward implementing Anne Arundel's ideas in their own state or county.

For further information on Anne Arundel County's initiatives, contact Vesta Kimble. Her contact information is as follows:

Ms. Vesta Kimble
Deputy Director
Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services
80 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: (410) 269-4603
Fax: (410) 974-8566

For other welfare-related information, or to learn more about the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network, visit our web site at <http://www.calib.com/peerta> or contact Paul Purnell or Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841.